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ABSTRACT

Green Chimneys School, a private school, used its summer session to take an imaginary trip to Europe. In each subject students took part in activities related to travel and European countries. For example, mathematics classes dealt with the monetary system, latitude, longitude, units of measurement, and conversion of money for the countries being "visited." Evening activities centered around recreation and folk activities of the various countries, such as gambling for France, pinatas for Spain, and an old world (root) beer fest for Germany. Films related to the countries were shown, and school librarians prepared a bibliography. (JK)

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A Trip to Europe; A Multimedia Experience.

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GREEN CHIMNEYS SCHOOL, Brewster, N.Y. 10509 1971
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Last Summer Our Entire School Traveled to Europe

Ever since we adopted the year-round school concept we have recognized that the summer term must not be more of the same but should be different. We have endeavored to make it as interesting as possible while never sacrificing our educational goals nor losing sight of the expected recreational opportunities guaranteed by the summer weather.

During the winter of 1971, the faculty of our school was divided into two teams to explore ways in which the curriculum could be revised so that the integration of the morning academic period and the afternoon and evening recreational program might be effected. After an initial get-together it was decided that all of the activities would relate but to a central theme and "A Trip to Europe" was set as the theme for the summer.

By the time Spring rolled around, each planning group had arrived at enough conclusions so that they were able to explain to the youngsters what they might expect. Youngsters began writing to travel agencies, embassies and airlines. Parents were involved through a number of school meetings. They, too, began the search for items which would aid the project.

It was most gratifying to see how a project of this type could involve teacher, parent, student, as well as the non-teaching staff. It was also possible to tap the community for help. For instance, the County Clerk obtained sufficient passport applications so that each student had the opportunity of filling one out. A Norwegian couple living in the Brewster area provided a film on Norway and spoke to all the classes on Scandinavia. During our week in Greece, a parent gave an extensive exhibition of Near Eastern belly dancing. The girls said they found belly dancing boring but the boys had all to do to keep their eyes from popping out of their heads. The dietician did her share

too. Each week the menu was painstakingly written in the language of the country being visited and featured special native recipes which had been gathered in order to guarantee as much authenticity as possible.

The summer program at our school encompasses 8 weeks or 40 class days. There is the additional advantage of being able to carry over some of the activities on the week-ends. The evenings, too, helped increase the program possibilities. This summer's special curriculum would, nevertheless, be adaptable to any school situation and could be carried out for varying lengths of time at different points in the school year. We were able to develop activities suitable for varying elementary school grade levels.

As the comprehensive plan to "travel" through Europe during the summer of 1971 was developed, it caused the faculty to ponder how to relate their teaching effort to this theme. After extensive thought, they were able to decide upon activities for each curriculum area.

In MATHEMATICS it was agreed that students should be given specific work in the telling of time, the use of money and in the various forms of measurement. Class discussions each week were to include the monetary system, latitude, longitude, units of measurement, and conversion of money for the various countries being visited. The daily LANGUAGE ARTS period from 10:30-12:00 encompasses all the reading, spelling, and written English work. As much teacher prepared material as possible was used. As an example, faculty prepared appropriate paragraphs with accompanying questions to be answered by the students, again based on class discussions of the country visited. The librarians set about pulling together books of stories from the various countries which were to be assigned to various grades each week to be studied as set forth in the New York State Literature section of English Language Arts. Specific time each day was, however, devoted to phonics and word attack skills in each class. Vocabulary

books were prepared for each class by each teacher from words relating to the country of the week. Teachers were responsible for preparing the summer curriculum in advance, on paper. The librarians and all special service people were on hand to assist in formulating the entire program. Creative dramatics were included in each class during the Language Arts period. Visual material was gathered together in preparation for the summer work. English classes started early in the Spring writing to the various sources for material. Parents were able to recommend materials, helped us to obtain films and helped us locate speakers from the various European countries. A geneology chart was worked out in each grade tracing family roots to Europe. The use of word games such as Scrabble, Scribbage, Yahtzee, R.S.V.P. were encouraged. The bulletin each week carried announcements of the trip for the following week including such things as climate of country, what to wear, language spoken, monetary system, and geographic location. The bulletin boards in the Administration Building, as well as in all classrooms were used for reports, menus, maps, (products, topographic) of the countries being visited. Teachers and parents had items they lent us for this part of the program. It should be apparent from all this that the SOCIAL STUDIES curriculum was covered in a team approach by all the teachers. Teams were set up in advance for the various grades. By the end of the summer it was our hope that the children would (1.) know some of the countries of Europe, (2.) be familiar with the map of Europe in relation to the U.S. (3.) have some concept of the distances involved among the countries, (4.) develop certain skills in researching and finding information and for having a good, exciting learning experience. Even in the PRIMARY GRADES the teachers were able to use the countries of the week in their work with the children. Each child was assigned a camera for the summer in all primary grades. It was interesting to see what they came up with. Inherent in the whole plan is the team approach with special emphasis being placed on the role of the librarians in helping

to collate materials. Letting the children and parents know early in the spring what we were planning for the summer, made it possible for everyone to work up some enthusiasm and gather materials to make this a successful experience.

While one-half of the faculty was worrying about academics, the other half concentrated on the recreation program. Week-day afternoons, evenings and week-ends were all thoroughly planned. Regarding camp philosophies, a compromise between complete free choice of activities and a strict schedule of activities by classes was sought which would bring about both exposure to many activities and structure, yet leaving time and choice for students to attend activities where there is more interest. A goal was to keep 'Summer Camp' distinct from morning academic happenings, yet camp and school had coordinated activities according to the weekly theme which involved studies of different countries in the world. The aim - 'Happenings' which will bring about a better understanding of self, one's surroundings and of Europe.

It was easy to find evening games and events to complement the program. For the International night when we were visiting the British Isles, each youngster was given a box of colored chalk and the parking lot became alive with magnificent drawings. Every child from kindergarten through eighth grade contributed to the display. It was reminiscent of what they had seen in "Mary Poppins". A great water festival was held during Scandinavian week; log rolling, water games, boating contests and a fishing derby were included.

In France we gambled away our money like it was printed on paper. Almost everyone was a winner at craps, roulette, bingo and other exciting games. A faculty member dressed in tails to illustrate a real croupier. In travelling over the rugged Pyrenees to Spain there was no time for siestas. Although live bulls were not available, a bull ring and bulls were created for a bull-in-the-ring game. We couldn't leave Spain without having the youngsters enjoy the surprises of the pinatas. No trip to Germany would be complete without an

old world beer fest, so complete with keg, tap and beer (root), plus pretzels, students and staff reveled on National Night. After sobering up the students toured the Alps and the valleys of Italy. Returning to ancient times, chariot races were held with students pulling modern counterparts of the ancient vehicles. While on one of the side trips, it was discovered that the bus had been hi-jacked - after all, what is a trip these days without a hi-jack. This necessitated a 4 mile hike back to the "hotel" dorm. Greece was the last stop. Greece is noted for two things; the well-known Olympics and exotic dancing. Both of these were observed by our groups. For the Olympics the eternal flame was lit by a relay of runners carrying the torch from Mt. Olympus (the barnyard) to the Olympic field (the ball field). An afternoon of games and contests ending with an under-water treasure hunt and a swim was shared by the youngsters. As stated previously thanks to the graciousness and cooperation of one of our parents, an evening of Near Eastern belly dancing was enjoyed by all. To finish up the tour, an international week was held with the highlight being an awards upper followed by a performance of folk dancing by the Nirkoda Folk Dance Troupe, a group of Oberlin College students who were touring this area.

One of the resources we were able to count on was the film library of RESCUE (Regional Educational Services Concept through Unified Effort) of Bridgewater, Conn. Our membership in this group made it possible for us to arrange outstanding films which the teachers integrated into the study of the country. A total of 31 educational films were used. They included topics both past and present. They ranged from medieval times to subjects of current interest. To coincide with the countries visited, the evening feature movies enjoyed by students included: Damm The Defiant, Mouse That Roared, Ulysses, 7th Voyage of Sinbad, The Long Ships, Jungle Book, Scarlet Pimpernel, Hannibal, Cowboy Canteen.

In addition, the librarians prepared a complete bibliography. They identified 135 titles currently available in our school library to read over the summer.

Students and teachers were reminded to see 914.2 and 942 for European countries, 398.4 for fairy tales of all countries, and 420-428 for language of countries. Life, Look, the National Geographic and the daily newspapers added to the available resources. The vertical file under the name of each country was another asset.

By the end of the summer youngsters had some idea of - geographic features, the form of government, people - customs, ways of earning a living, recreation, and industry. The children accumulated pictures, maps, posters, charts, diagrams, and any other item which they felt might help them make a presentation. The work in each class was most creative. It ranged from extensive reports in the older grades to accordion books and murals in the lower grades.

There were many other things we accomplished. There was probably much more we could have added. Many might feel the fast pace of such a trip would cause us to miss many things, but any real summer trip to Europe would have made us feel that way. There's nothing to stop people from exploring more throughout the year. All the youngsters had a good start. Just like all travelers, we are looking forward to next summer when we will visit our neighbors to the South, both in the Caribbean and in the mainland of South America.